

## **Week of November 18, 2002: MaineDOT Flash Facts**

### **Topic: Driver Distractions**

#### **Openers/Facts:**

- More than 14,000 crashes each year in Maine are due to Driver Inattention or Distraction.
- Driver Distraction or Inattention cause nearly 50 deaths and 7,000 injuries each year.
- At 50 miles per hour, your vehicle will travel 150 feet in just two seconds. (less time than it takes to find a CD or look at the map)
- About 40% of Maine's crashes are caused by driver distraction or inattention.
- From 1999 through 2001 driver inattention and distraction was a factor in:
  - Over 23,000 **rear end** crashes that resulted in 12 fatalities and nearly 11,000 injuries.
  - Almost 10,000 **intersection** crashes resulting in 36 deaths and over 4,000 injuries.
  - About 7500 **run off road** crashes resulting in 43 deaths and 4,000 injuries.
  - 1400 **Head on** crashes resulting in 33 fatalities and over 900 injuries.
- Driving is a full time mental and physical task.

**Closer:** Flash, the MaineDOT Road Model says " When You're Driving, Just Drive!"

#### **Monday:**

-Everything is at our fingertips in today's vehicles. (Today's vehicles are "rolling living rooms")

Vehicles now have:

- CD players
- Cellular telephones
- Cupholders - to make drinking (and eating) easier
- Video/DVD players for the passengers

Don't let these conveniences become driving distractions.

#### **Tips:**

Distractions come in two forms: Visual (not watching what's on the road) and mental (thinking about things other than driving). Both are very dangerous and can cause you to miss what's happening on the road until it's too late.

- Avoid activities that take your mind and eyes off the road.
- The car is not the place to make up time by tending to non-driving activities.
- "Just Drive" - leave multi-tasking to non-driving times of the day.
- Watch for others who may not be paying attention.
- Drive at a reasonable speed.

*Prepared by:  
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## **Wednesday**

### **Tips:**

Being inattentive or distracted when you are behind the wheel can lead to disaster. Set other things aside before you start your trip and focus your mind and eyes on the road.

- Be aware that road and traffic conditions are constantly changing (during this time of year, dry pavement can turn slippery very quickly).
- Keep your eyes and mind continually on the road.
- If something is going to take your attention away from driving, pull safely off the road first. (not just onto the shoulder)

Keep music volumes at a safe level. Loud music blocks out warning sounds (sirens, screeching brakes, horns). Keep your ears open to outside sounds.

Keep your attention sharp by varying your view of the road and shifting to different perspectives (go from watching the road ahead to checking out activity at the upcoming intersection, to looking at driveways for possible moving vehicles, to checking mirrors...).

Adjust your driving perspective. Driving is more than motoring to a destination - you have a goal of keeping yourself and others out of serious danger. Inattention makes that priority goal difficult.

## **Friday:**

Distractions that can cause a lapse of driving attention:

- Reaching in the back seat for something you need.
- Spotting something or someone on the side of the road.
- Talking with passengers.
- Attention to kids or pets.
- Reading a map or other material.
- Eating or drinking.
- Putting on make-up or shaving.
- Reaching for dropped items.
- Smoking

### **Tips:**

- Driving is a full time job. Do not let other activities interfere. (Even one second of not paying attention can lead to the most costly mistake of your life.)
- Your mind should be focused on your driving - so you are ready to react should something change on the road.
- Your eyes should be regularly scanning the road- well ahead; along the roadsides; and behind you.

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You can prevent a crash. Before you do something that takes attention away from driving, ask yourself: “How important is that... phone call; picking up the dropped baby toy; or struggling with the CD case?” Is it worth the risking a crash that can injure or kill you, your passengers, or someone else?

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